



Is It Love?

1 John 4:16: (NASB) *We have come to know and have believed the love, which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.*



God is love! We as Christians love to bask in the magnitude of this statement as it gives us comfort and confidence that our faith is in a Being who possesses understanding, compassion and wisdom. God is love! That statement just makes us feel good! So, was that the reason John wrote it - to make us feel good? Or did he write it to help us not only unlock the depths of God's character but to also unlock the potential depths of our own characters? This is love as you have never thought of it before!

Love is variously defined in Scripture (see the Bonus Material) ranging from family affection to brotherly bonding to philanthropic activity to benevolence. The first levels are the most "attached" kind of love, meaning real "back and forth" and very much on an earthly human relationship level. Once you get to philanthropy, you begin to rise above the idea of give and take to just giving. Benevolence rises to the heights of giving in a way that cannot be reciprocated and does not seek or need reciprocation. It is this kind of love that describes God's love and this program will focus mainly on this kind of love.

Love: Strongs #25 agapao (ag-ap-ah'-o); to love (in a social or moral sense)

Love: Strongs #26 agape (ag-ah'-pay); love, i.e. affection or benevolence

Here is a description of the power of this benevolent love:

1 John 4:14-21: (NASB) *¹⁴We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.*

Quite simply, the world needed saving so the Son was sent. God's love is evident because His plan through Jesus is to save the world from sin and death.

¹⁶We have come to know and have believed the love <26> which God has for us. God is love <26>, and the one who abides in love <26> abides in God, and God abides in him.



To those who grasp His plan, it should be obvious that God IS love. We should want to abide in the love of our Creator so that His character can transfer to and abide in us.

On a personal level, what is it you believe is God's plan for all the world of mankind? Can you look at that plan and see that God really is love? Sometimes we believe things about God that should not be attributed to Him and His character, which takes away from the idea of a truly benevolent God. His benevolence works through His justice, wisdom and power.

How does our character fit into becoming like God's?



¹⁷By this, **love <26>** is perfected (completed) with us, so that we may have confidence in the Day of Judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. ¹⁸There is no fear in **love <26>**; but perfect (complete) **love <26>** casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in **love <26>**.

Perfected with us - is anything really ever perfected in us as imperfect human beings? The word also can be translated **complete**. God's love can be **complete** in us.

As He is - as God is complete in His love and is confident in the work of the Day of Judgment without fear, so we also should be confident in His plan - trouble, judgment and all!

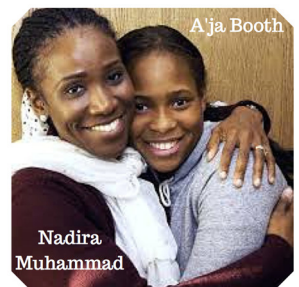
¹⁹We **love <25>**, because He first **loved <25>** us. ²⁰If someone says, I **love <25>** God, and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not **love <25>** his brother, whom he has seen, cannot **love <25>** God whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who **loves <25>** God should **love <25>** his brother also.

Don't just talk your conviction...LIVE your conviction! When we have doctrinal differences with our brother, we must apply God's love to our Christianity. How do we stand for what we believe in? More on this soon.



Sister Nadira, A Selfless Act - Muslim Donates Kidney, www.finalcall.com

- *Here's my sister. I watched her grow up in Islam. She's a schoolteacher and while she was teaching school there was a young girl in her class that was on dialysis and Sister Nadira said to that student, "I will give you one of my kidneys."*



This is an example of a selfless act. The story will continue throughout this program.

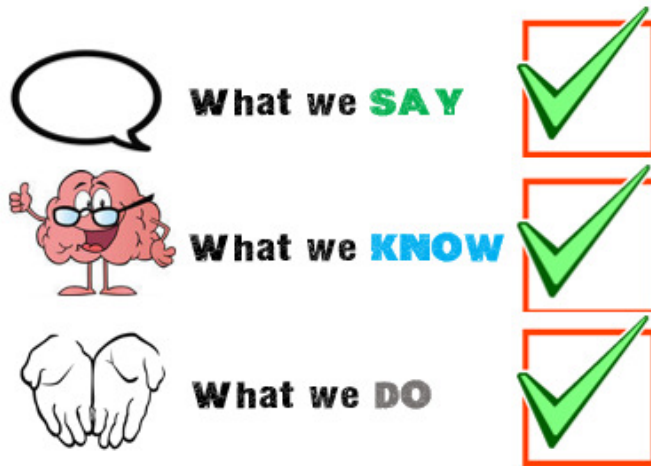
**So far we have seen an example of God's love.
How do we learn to live that kind of love?**



Fortunately we have the answer meticulously laid out for us in Scripture in 1 Corinthians 13. Let us first establish the context of this chapter, frequently called "the Love Chapter" and read at weddings. But it is much broader than just for a husband and wife and covers every aspect of our lives.

1 Corinthians was written to a church whose priorities were inside out and backwards. They closed their eyes to dark moral sin, while engaging in a sectarian brand of Christianity that welcomed no church discipline, a minimizing of the power of fellowship to solve issues, abuses of the Lord's supper, spiritual pride, misuse of the gifts and neglect of things most important. Paul wrote to them to straighten them out. He was very firm in his instructions and rebuking.

After going through all of these issues, Paul begins defining God's love in a practical way for us to learn and apply it. He starts by identifying how the three public parts of our Christianity NEED the kind of love God has to be our foundation:



What we SAY 1 Corinthians 13:1: (NASB) If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love <26>; I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

People acting like noisy gongs draw a lot of attention to themselves and confuse you to prevent you from focusing on the most important thing. What we say is important. It needs to be focused on higher things and not just “look at me” kind of things.



Ephesians 4:13-16: (NASB) ¹³until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature (complete) man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. ¹⁴As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

Replace the noise with maturity! To be mature in Christ means to grow up and focus on what brings growth and not what brings attention to us. We are supposed to be helping each other to become more Christ-like. This was one of the problems in Corinth. They were using the gifts of the Spirit to draw attention to themselves. They made a lot of noise but did not have a lot of growth.

How do we mature?

¹⁵but speaking the truth in love <26>, we are to grow up in all aspects into him who is the head, even Christ, ¹⁶from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love <26>.

The key is to be a small part of the whole! What we say must be the right things for the right reasons - for the body and not just ME.



We think CQ is a good example of the body working together. About 30 volunteers work on this program on a regular basis, each with a different job contributing to the whole.



What we KNOW

1 Corinthians 13:2: (NASB) *²If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have **love <26>**, I am nothing.*

One of the gifts was miraculous knowledge - to know things without studying them. To have even that - but without having benevolent love - would be nothing.

1 Corinthians 8:1-3: (NASB) *¹Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. ²If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known, as he ought to know; ³but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.*

One of the debated issues in the early church was whether or not to eat meat that had previously been offered to idols. The Apostle Paul said eating the meat was not a sin - it was just meat. But if doing so hurt your brother, it is not correct to do. Be sensitive to the needs and concerns of others.



A caller from St. Louis suggests: I have been contemplating about when I feel fear. When I'm fearful, I become angry. When I am fearful, I am not being loving or feeling loved. Fear is something that drives us. I pray, "God, do not let me move from You."

A key point brought out by our caller: "Feeling" loved. God's love is there whether we feel it or not. Feeling afraid does not mean we have to act afraid. Feeling angry does not mean we have to act angry. We can make a choice based on what we know to be true, not necessarily what we feel.

It also involves intolerance of others. That says to me, "I am not receiving the love of God and allowing it in me."

We are given the tools to be loving, but do we use them?



New lease on life, A Selfless Act - Muslim Donates Kidney, [wwwfinalcall.com](http://www.finalcall.com)

- *She went and took tests. She was a match! So less than two months ago or about that, she was operated on in Detroit and the little girl in her classroom now has a kidney and a new lease on life.*



What we DO

1 Corinthians 13:3: *And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have **love <26>**, it profits me nothing.*

Matthew 6:1-2: (NASB) *¹Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven. ²So when you give to the poor; do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.*

The doing of righteous acts is meaningless before God if they are not driven by God's love in us! We are not supposed to do them to be noticed by others.



What does love do?

1 Corinthians 13:4: (NASB) ⁴love <26> is patient, love <26> is kind and is not jealous; love <26> does not brag and is not arrogant...

 What does selfless love look like, *The Story of Ian & Larissa*, desiringgod.org

- *Ian and I first met in 2005 at college and had a blast for ten months getting to know each other. I found one of my favorite pictures, which I think was actually taken right before his accident. He set the camera up on his tripod and it's just a classic Ian face that to me just sums up who he is. We had been dating for ten months and he was working an extra job for his dad and he was on his way to*



work near Pittsburg, and we got a phone call that he had been in an accident and we didn't know if it was when he got to work or on his way. So, we got down to Pittsburg and I was just praying the whole time in the car that it wouldn't be his brain. After being in the hospital for a few hours, we found out it was and he had been in brain surgery for a few hours and had suffered a traumatic brain injury.



The list of what love IS aptly begins with patience. God's patience is eternal and we are called to live patiently as well.

love is patient - to be of long spirit; to not lose heart

Ephesians 4:1-3: (NASB) ¹Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love <26>, ³being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

To not lose heart is to be focused on the big picture - the long term. Godly Christian love is bound to and built upon such thinking. That is part of the secret to getting through fear and anxiety.

How patient God must be to give us this experience of the permission of evil over these last thousands of years!

 *Unparalleled love, A Selfless Act - Muslim Donates Kidney*, wwwfinalcall.com

- *What this sister did is an act of unparalleled love for her Christian sister!*

love is kind - to show one's self to be mild

Ephesians 4:31-32: (NASB) ³¹Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. ³²Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

With a foundation of patience, kindness towards others and ourselves becomes attainable and the highest example of this kind demeanor paves our way.

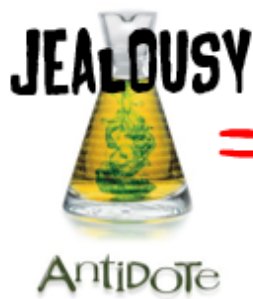
True love is selfless. It is prepared to sacrifice. — **Sadhu Vaswani**



love is not jealous - to be heated or boil - can be in a good or bad sense

Philippians 1:15-17: (NASB) ¹⁵Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from good will; ¹⁶the latter do it out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel; ¹⁷the former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment.

Jealousy can more easily be identified and defeated when we approach life with patience and kindness. Then we can more easily notice jealousy rear its ugly and ungodly head.



Romans 12:5: Weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice. Enter into someone else's experience from the standpoint of building them up.

Now that we know the basis of what love is, we can expand to include what love does and does not do.

love does not brag - to extol one's self excessively

Galatians 5:24-26: (NASB) ²⁴Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. ²⁶Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Jealousy is an identifier that we are longing for attention. Let our boasting be of Christ only, for that will diffuse the rivalries that can easily replace the unity of Christian love. If we have godly love, we should not be bragging about anything. We are to be selfless. It is not about me, it is about Christ in me.



A caller from Connecticut suggests: I'm inspired by the caller from St. Louis and her thought about fear. **Perfect (complete) love casts out fear.** An example is how the alienation or separation from God began when Adam and Eve sinned. Before that, they knew no shame in their nakedness because there was no fear. What a critical part of love and godliness.

We want to project God's complete love FROM us to others.

love is not arrogant - to inflate, puff up, make proud

1 Corinthians 8:1-3: (NASB) ¹Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but **love <26>** edifies. ²If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; ³but if anyone **loves <25>** God, he is known by Him.

Bragging can lead to arrogance. Arrogance is a deep issue - we need all of the previous elements of love to combat it. It is especially important for Christian leaders to be on alert for this. We can hold knowledge over someone's head and feel superior. Yes, we are supposed to learn God's truth but we are not supposed to bask in the glory of our knowing.



What in our daily lives can get in the way of expressing God's love? The things love is NOT - jealousy, bragging, arrogance.

Godly love must be foundational to every aspect of our Christian life - it must drive what we say, know and do. To use godly love as a foundation, we need to know what it does. Here is what we know so far:

recap
recap

1 Corinthians 13:4: (NASB) ⁴love <26> is patient, ^{love <26>} is kind and is not jealous; ^{love <26>} does not brag and is not arrogant,



A caller from Connecticut mentioned the Oregon Community College shooting that happened this past week. The shooter was apparently targeting Christian victims. How does God's love fit into this?

God's love is patient. He ABSOLUTELY has a plan that will allow sin to reign for a comparatively short time after which He will cut it off forever. God is allowing these things for the eternal benefit of all mankind. What happened in Oregon is hideous and one of many horrible things happening in the world. God's loving plan is working itself out. Sin can be likened to an infection given antibiotics. The remedy is not instantaneous but it IS working to eradicate the disease. God's love needs to live in our lives.

Now onto further descriptions:

1 Corinthians 13:5: (NASB) ⁵does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

love does not act unbecomingly - do not act in a way that does not clearly reflect who you are

If you claim to be a Christian - a footstep follower of Jesus - do you act in a way that matches your proclamation? Are you a follower in name only? God's love does not act in a way that is not genuine.

James 1:14-17: (NASB) ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. ¹⁶Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. ¹⁷Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.

God's own example is one of steady character! We must ask: Does my character reflect the steadiness of God?



Hope for the future, *The Story of Ian & Larissa*, desiringgod.org

- I moved in with his family after the accident, so I was really involved in his therapy and just did whatever I could to make his life fun. We would go out on dates and looking back it's weird because he couldn't talk and he couldn't eat, so we probably look like complete weirdos being on dates but we had a blast and I just talked to him all the time. I knew that before Ian's accident he was very serious about marriage and was ring shopping, so I knew where he was and that helped me so much after he couldn't talk. I knew that he loved me and I knew where he wanted the relationship to go because we were dating very intentionally. We just prayed that marriage would someday happen and*



watched all of our friends get married and start having families. That was challenging but we just tried to hold out hope that would be us one day.

love does not seek its own - is not after its own self interests or desires

Humility must drive this type of Christian love.

James 4:1-3: (NASB) ¹What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ²You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. ³You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

How willing am I to be a lesser member of the body for the sake of the whole body? How am I living the cause of Christ?

love is not provoked - stimulated or spurred to (a negative) anger

Ephesians 4:25-27: (NASB) ²⁵Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another. ²⁶**BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN;** do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.

It is far easier to remain unprovoked if we are not all about our own agenda! We need to be flexible to have God's will work in our lives. What is HIS will? What is the best approach? If we have benevolent love that does not anger, it helps us get to the core of the matter.



love does not take into account a wrong suffered - do not keep score!

Matthew 5:10-13: (NASB) ¹⁰Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. ¹³You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men.

How often has God been wronged by those who love Him? It is for us to learn how to always keep our perspective focused on the greater mission while we deal with our everyday life.



We received an email this week from a listener: I feel absolutely privileged to find someone who interprets the Scripture as it is written and not just the philosophy or mythology of man.

We have heard a lot about what love does NOT do. But what about what love DOES?

1 Corinthians 13:6-7: (NASB) ⁶does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

love does not rejoice in unrighteousness

Philippians 3:18-19: (NASB) ¹⁸For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, ¹⁹whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.



Unfortunately we see many Christian leaders who fall into this category: It is about the money, the lifestyle, getting and not giving.

Our response to unrighteousness should be one of deep and godly sorrow.

love rejoices with the truth

1 Thessalonians 3:6-8: (NASB) *6But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us good news of your faith and love, and that you always think kindly of us, longing to see us just as we also long to see you, 7for this reason, brethren, in all our distress and affliction we were comforted about you through your faith; 8for now we really live, if you stand firm in the Lord.*

It is great to “feel” Christian and attend Christian events. But make sure these things are all based on Christian truth from God’s word.

Godly love truly draws its strength from truth - not from emotion or circumstances - but from truth! Our emotions should be funneled through selflessness.

Because of this aspect of love, rejoicing in truth, the next several aspects are possible.

 **Gratefulness board, *The Story of Ian & Larissa*, desiringgod.org**

- This is our board of gratefulness and we encourage anybody who comes in to write a note of something they are thankful for. Could be really small. Mine is just “Saturday mornings,” and it’s just a good way that we found to be just practicing gratefulness. Ian, I think half of yours say “my Wifey,” which is pretty cool. We decided that we couldn’t really consider marriage as an option until Ian was able to communicate, but if he could communicate with me than we could have a marriage knowing that it would be really different, but as long as Ian could talk to me then we could make it work. So, once Ian began communicating it became a little bit more of an option and then we just kind of watched Ian progress.*



love bears all things - to thatch (like a thatched roof), cover protect or preserve

Love protects those we love. It seeks for their preservation.

Romans 15:1-2: (NASB) *1Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. 2Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.*

Godly love based in truth bears up under the pressure of all things.



LOVE...IS STRONG!

love believes all things - but does NOT mean love is gullible

Habakkuk 3:17-18: (NASB) *¹⁷Though the fig tree should not blossom and there be no fruit on the vines, Though the yield of the olive should fail And the fields produce no food, Though the flock should be cut off from the fold And there be no cattle in the stalls, ¹⁸Yet I will exult in the LORD, I will rejoice in the God of my salvation.*

Here is a scriptural example of everything falling apart - this can happen in our lives. God's love can carry us through even under the worst of circumstances. We then want to reflect God's love to help carry others. Fiery trials are difficult. In Scripture, fire destroys but it also purifies.

Love never gives up on its godly and truth-driven vision of the future.

LOVE...IS FOCUSED!

love hopes all things

Romans 8:24-25: (NASB) *²⁴For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? ²⁵But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.*

Love based in truth exudes hope even when you cannot recognize the "why" of hope.

LOVE...IS ENCOURAGING!

God's love plants a greater hope in us. Can we take our experiences and project out that greater hope to others by reaching a hand of encouragement to them?



love endures all things

1 Peter 2:23-24: (NASB) ²³and while being reviled, he did not revile in return; while suffering, he uttered no threats, but kept entrusting himself to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴and he himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by his wounds you were healed.



This is an enormous expression of God's love through Christ. Now we need to redirect that to others. Love based in truth endures those things, which would otherwise seem impossible.



Our love for one another should also be strong, encouraging, focused and resilient because that is God's love IN us and THROUGH us.



Happy marriage, *The Story of Ian & Larissa, desiringgod.org*

- *(Larissa) I think what helped us in deciding to make this commitment to each other, at least for me, is knowing that Ian wouldn't have left me if the roles were reversed, and that we love each other and we know that God's going to be faithful to our marriage. We're able to love each other with I think a more Christ-like love because of Ian's disability and just understand that picture a little bit better than if you were healthy. Do you agree?*
- *(Ian) Yes.*
- *(Larissa) What about God enables you to have a happy marriage?*
- *(Ian) You know He's awesome.*
- *(Larissa) He's awesome?*
- *(Ian) Yeah.*



How can we sum up this love that we are talking about in one simple phrase?

One simple phrase encapsulates all of what has gone before:

1 Corinthians 13:8: (NASB) *Love never fails.*

Because this love is founded in the very nature of God Himself, it truly is impossible for it to fail.

Lamentations 3:22-23: (NASB) ²²*The LORD'S loving kindnesses indeed never cease, for His compassions never fail.* ²³*They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.*

When the sun comes up in the morning, we have the new compassions of God rising with that sun. When you get up in the morning, God's compassions are already in place - sometimes they are hidden behind a hard experience and we need to look for them.





Our task is to take this love - the very core of God Himself - and learn to apply it to our little lives. We are just dust...but we are beloved dust in the eyes of God. How thankful we should be! This can transform our daily existence!

The specific challenge faced by the Corinthian church was that of misplaced priorities. The Apostle Paul's lesson on the core value of love was placed in 1 Corinthians to help them make a paradigm shift.

They were so focused on the miraculous gifts they had lost sight of what was important:

1 Corinthians 13:8-9: (NASB) ⁸*love <26> never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. ⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part;*

The gifts of the Holy Spirit (the miraculous ability to prophesy, speak in other languages without having studied that language and having instant knowledge) were temporary. They were to be used as tools to spread the Gospel and would become obsolete after fulfilling their purpose. But godly love, the Apostle tells us, never fails, quits or gets old...it is everlasting!

1 Corinthians 13:10: (NASB) *but when the perfect (complete) comes, the partial will be done away.*

The Apostle told the Corinthians there would be a change. When something *complete* (and we believe that was the New Testament in a written form) would be put in place, the gifts of the Spirit - would then be retired. They were used as a temporary bridge for preaching the Gospel and would no longer be necessary once the physical written history of the New Testament was available to share.

"The mark of the immature man is that he wants to die nobly for a cause, while the mark of the mature man is that he wants to live humbly for one." — Wilhelm Stekel

1 Corinthians 13:11-12: (NASB) ¹¹*When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. ¹²For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.*

The Apostle is saying, "Grow up!" There is much more at stake than showing what you can do - at stake is the maturity of the body of Christ.

And now the magnificent conclusion!

1 Corinthians 13:13: (NASB) *But now faith, hope, love <26>, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love <26>.*

Why is love the greatest? Faith is something we have *towards* God, hope is something we have *from* God, but love is something we have that *IS* God! It ties the others together.

Romans 8:37-39: (NASB) ³⁷*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*



*So, is it love?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*

*And now even more to think about...
only in the **Full Edition** of CQ Rewind!*



If you haven't got any charity in your heart, you have the worst kind of heart trouble. — Bob Hope

It is under the greatest adversity that there exists the greatest potential for doing good, both for one's self and others. — Dalai Lama XIV

Life is an exciting business, and most exciting when it is lived for others. — Helen Keller

Greek words for love in the New Testament:

These first two were our primary focus, the rest are building blocks for human life:

Love: Strongs #25 agapao (ag-ap-ah'-o); to love (in a social or moral sense):
KJV-- (be-) love (-ed)

Love: Strongs #26 agape (ag-ah'-pay); love, i.e. affection or benevolence;
specially (plural) a love-feast
KJV-- (feast of) charity ([-ably]), dear, love

Love: Strongs #5360 philadelphia (fil-ad-el-fee'-ah); fraternal affection
KJV-- brotherly love (kindness), love of the brethren

Love: Strongs #5361 philadelphos (fil-ad'-el-fos); fond of brethren, i.e. fraternal
KJV-- love as brethren

Love: Strongs #5362 philandros (fil'-an-dros); fond of man, i.e. affectionate as a wife
KJV-- love their husbands

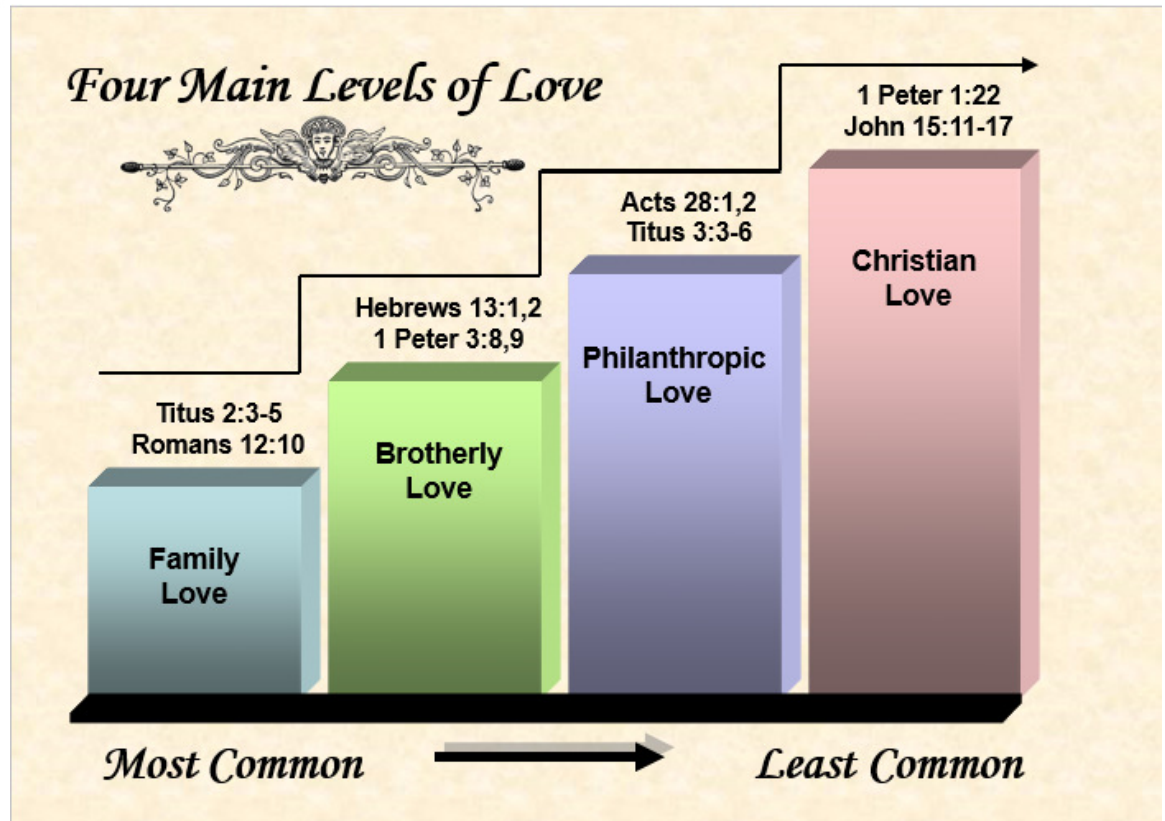
Love: Strongs #5387 philostorgos (fil-os'-tor-gos); fond of natural relatives,
i.e. fraternal towards fellow Christian
KJV-- kindly affectioned

Love: Strongs #5388 philoteknos (fil-ot'-ek-nos); fond of one's children, i.e. maternal
KJV-- love their children

Love: Strongs #5363 philanthropia (fil-an-thro-pee'-ah); fondness of mankind,
i.e. benevolence ("philanthropy")
KJV-- kindness, love towards man



The Bible defines different levels of "love," and based on our observations, we have grouped these into four "levels." The **First Level** is the most basic and common in practice and the **Fourth Level** is the rarest.



First Level: #5362 philandros, #5387 philostorgos, #5388 philoteknos: The affection between spouses, parents to children and children to parents. Though these expressions are more intimate than the second, they are based on that same fraternal approach. This level is the most basic and instinctive.



Titus 2:3-5: (NKJV) ³the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things— ⁴that they admonish the young women to **love <5362>** their husbands, to **love <5388>** their children, ⁵to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed.

Romans 12:10: (NKJV) Be **kindly affectionate <5387>** to one another with **brotherly love <5360>**, in honor giving preference to one another;

You should be loving fellow Christians as you love your own natural relatives. There is a natural basis for a connection already in existence.



Second level: #5360 philadelphia, #5361 philadelphos: Brotherly love - fraternal affection, fondness.

After familial love, this is the most common expression of love among mankind. Families have it, teams have it, those who serve in the military have it, even gangs have it. It is common to all, for it is a form of give and take, protect and be protected. It is expressed in the "I've got your back" sense of loyalty. There is a connection from a common goal or activity.

Hebrews 13:1-2: (NKJV) ¹Let **brotherly love <5360>** continue. ²Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.

1 Peter 3:8-9: (NKJV) ⁸Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; **love as brothers <5361>**, be tenderhearted, be courteous; ⁹not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

Third Level: #5363 philanthropia: This level moves out of the relationships which are natural or forged by common ground and into relationships of no previous commonality, love being generously expressed without previous ties or obligation from the one who expresses it. This third level is where we find the basis of Philanthropy - this word is only used twice in the Bible.

Acts 28:1-2: (NKJV) ¹Now when they had escaped, they then found out that the island was called Malta. ²And the natives showed us unusual **kindness <5363>**; for they kindled a fire and made us all welcome, because of the rain that was falling and because of the cold.

Titus 3:3-6: (ASV) ³For we also once were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. ⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior, and His **love <5363>** toward man, appeared, ⁵not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, ⁶which He poured out upon us richly, through Jesus Christ our Savior;

For these first three levels, there is some clear give and take involved. The higher the level, the more giving and the less taking - this brings us to the **Fourth Level** of love.

1 Peter 1:22: (NKJV) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere **love of the brethren <5360>**, **love <25>** one another fervently with a pure heart.





Fourth Level: #25 agapao, #26 agape: This is a level of selflessness and benevolence that surpasses philanthropy as it encompasses a level of giving that has no thought or need of reciprocation. Philanthropy is generally accompanied by some manner of public recognition, but this fourth level has no concern for such things - it is only concerned with the well-being of those to which it is giving.



John 15:11-17: (NKJV) ¹¹*These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.* ¹²*This is my commandment, that you **love <25>** one another as I have **loved <25>** you.* ¹³*Greater **love <26>** has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.* ¹⁴*You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.* ¹⁵*No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from my Father I have made known to you.* ¹⁶*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in my name He may give you.* ¹⁷*These things I command you, that you **love <25>** one another.*

Jesus is speaking to his disciples the night before his crucifixion. He knew his time was very short, so he spoke those things that were of absolute importance. This is the core of his message to his followers. He *commands* a selfless love just as he himself loved them. This is the deepest form of love.